

BODY OF PROOF: WEEK TWO
GEMS FOR JESUS

In our last study we talked a little bit about how our alienation from God not only creates in us a sense of 'lost' and lack, but actually causes us to be self-centered. Self-centered not because we're just 'into our 'selves' but because of the inner pain we subconsciously feel due to this feeling of being lost – complete disconnect from others – and lacking. This profound alienation creates societies in which people are motivated to heal and fill their personal emptiness. And this leads to a life in which we are totally under the domination of our self. Even after we surrender our lives to Jesus, this can still be the way we subconsciously deal with life: as self-focused individuals.

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences that cause us to feel rejection or abandonment are primary places the enemy works to reinforce the lie we must be self-focused individuals. How has God given you victory over rejection or abandonment in your life? (Until we believe we are fully intimate, loved, valued, and cared for by God, rejection will have too much power in our lives.)
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Our view of everything should be shaped by the nature of God since that's the image in which we're made. God's nature is a perfect communion/community of Three Persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – who have eternally loved one another. That is, they have always thought of each other rather than think of themselves. They have perfectly loved each other. And the amazing paradox is that each Person is perfectly fulfilled. None has any sense of lost or lack.

This is the way God meant for us to build our lives and relationships. Not from a sense of lost and lack, but from love and fullness. In Christ we have a new starting point other than our selves: **His love for us**. He becomes the source of our love and fullness, and we engage Him and one another from that place.

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever experienced God's love for another person, that in the flesh you knew you were not stirring up on your own? What does that love feel like?
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In Paul's train of thought in this letter, it is because our minds have been renewed that we have all the blessings in Christ [Ephesians 1.3-12], and because we are guaranteed the power to actually experience these blessings through The Holy Spirit in [Ephesians 1.13-14], that we CAN now see each other completely differently: gems for Jesus, Christ's glorious inheritance!

“For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having already had the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his [Christ's] glorious inheritance in the saints...” [Ephesians 1.15-18]

Another passage from Paul talks about this as well, how we are to see each other through The Holy Spirit's eyes, not through 'natural' eyes. ***“Because of Christ's death and resurrection, we don't evaluate people by what they have or how they look. We looked at the Messiah that way once and got it all wrong, as you know. We certainly don't look at him that way anymore. Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life emerges!” [2 Corinthians 5.16-17]***

For Paul the Apostle, we are meant to experience power in loving each other and viewing one another as gems for Jesus because we have had a radical shift in our attitudes (mindsets). And the radical shift in our attitudes comes from the 'saving'

work of God's grace. We are not only saved from the penalty of our sin, not only saved from the power of our sin, but we are also saved from the system of thinking that sin has created for thousands of years.

We have a tendency to separate right behaviors from right mindsets (attitudes). This tendency comes from a deep-seated mindset that tells us that we are responsible to produce right behaviors. So, for example, when we look at verses later in Ephesians that talk about how we are to treat each other with loving kindness and keeping unity in the bond of peace [Ephesians 4.2-3], it is easy for us to slip into the old "self" mindset that it is our responsibility to respond this way. Over time that becomes difficult, and we get discouraged. That's because we subconsciously live from this 'performance trap.' If our minds are renewed, we will find ourselves with the right attitudes that allow us respond rightly. Loving others is not something that we try to do, it is evidence of our security in Christ. We will look at each other differently: *gems for Jesus!*

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you believe you are completely loved and accepted by God, a true gem for Jesus? What has challenged those beliefs in your life? (No shame if you still struggle to believe this, let us set up an extended prayer time for you with one of our freedom teams.) • If everyone viewed each other in the church as gems for Jesus, how would it affect the culture? • It would be far easier to confront sin, in our own and others' lives, in a community where we freely love because our value (gem for Jesus) and fullness in Christ is not as risk. Have you experienced fear in confessing your sin? Have you experienced fear in having hard conversations of truth and life into difficult areas of other's lives? Why?
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Imagine a group of people who are birthed together, each seen as a gem for Jesus, freely loving one another without any self-seeking motivation because they know they are each loved and full in Christ. This is what God's Spirit has done for us: He has plunged us (baptized us) into such a group. It's called 'the church!' [1 Corinthians 12.13] This was always meant to be one of the big WOW's of our relationship with Jesus.

Final Take-Home Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we have fully surrendered to Christ, we are not principal for our lives anymore, He is. Do you trust God to look out for you, to constantly be working all things together for good? Are you able to release the control of being self-centered? • Have you minimized the beauty of the body of Christ (the church) due to hurt and disappointment? Forgive where the Holy Spirit leads. Ask Jesus to show you His beauty currently at work in the church. • Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind names of those that He wants you to see rightly as gems for Jesus. Yield to and acknowledge the Father's fullness and love for those people, even if you don't feel it in your emotions.
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Prayer Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the Holy Spirit to show you where your mind needs to be renewed. If a lie is highlighted, repent for your agreement with the lie. Reject the lie. Then ask the Holy Spirit to give you clarity of the truth. Receive the truth. Write down the truth, find time to meditate on it, add it into your prayer life daily.
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Share With The Lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those outside of Christ automatically live their lives from a sense of lost and lack. What we can do is listen for verbal cues when those needs surface in others, and then we can respond with something like "relationship with God for me has changed the way I deal with my inadequacies."
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